

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996247908503316
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Titolo	The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State : a political history // P.J. Jones
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 1974
ISBN	0-511-09666-6 0-511-58376-1
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (ix, 372 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Disciplina	320.9/45/48
Soggetti	Rimini (Italy) Politics and government Papal States Politics and government
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Sommario/riassunto	A detailed history, from the mid-thirteenth to the early sixteenth century, of an Italian state, Rimini, and its ruling family, the Malatesta. The Malatesta are best known, through the works of Jacob Burckhardt, John Addington Symonds and others, for their colourful contribution to the court life and culture of renaissance Italy. There are other sides to their history of at least comparable importance. By their representative status, as princes of middle rank, and by their unusually long tenure of power, the Malatesta are among the families most typical in all its stages of Italy's Age of Despots: in their acquisition and exercise of authority, their political career and personality, in the circumstances of their fall. At the same time, by their position as papal subjects, in Romagna and the March of Ancona, their progress is inseparable from the parallel history of government in the Papal State, first effectively founded in the same century as Maltesta rule and consolidated, two hundred years later, by the destruction of the Malatesta and other tyrants of central Italy. It is the purpose of this book to investigate in detail the origin, development and character of Maltesta government and the causes of its overthrow, against the background of changing relations between popes and despots, dynastic and papal signoria.

